

FW: Statement: Coutts border blockade: Minister Savage

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FYI, released just over an hour ago.

Coutts border blockade: Minister Savage

February 08, 2022 Media inquiries

Acting Minister of Justice and Solicitor General Sonya Savage issued the following statement on the continuing situation near the Coutts border crossing:

"The blockade near the Coutts border crossing continues to be of concern to Albertans near and far, and law enforcement continues to focus many resources on it.

"To repeat what we've said on several occasions: Alberta's government will always stand up for people's fundamental democratic right to protest.

"However, the constitutional rights to freedom of assembly and expression have reasonable limits. When protesters threaten public safety, disrupt the public peace or prevent Albertans from accessing vital infrastructure, then they open themselves up to potential action from law enforcement.

"We believe the Coutts blockade has crossed this line. It has severely inconvenienced lawful motorists, prevented commercial goods from reaching their destination, and it has the potential to impede emergency vehicles from reaching people in need of aid.

"I have heard the calls for an end to the blockade. I share Albertans' frustration and their desire for life to return to normal.

"The RCMP and local law enforcement agencies are on site, sharing information and working in tandem to maintain public safety.

"Those participating in this illegal blockade could potentially face charges or actions under any number of laws, including the federal *Criminal Code*, the provincial *Traffic Safety Act* and the *Critical Infrastructure Defence Act*.

"Whatever action law enforcement may take is at their independent discretion. I trust the authorities to lay appropriate charges wherever the evidence provides reasonable grounds for doing so.

"As for the participants in this blockade: they need to recognize that this protest is no longer peaceful and is causing hardship to thousands of law-abiding Albertans.

"I call upon those involved in the blockade to respect the rule of law, as well as the wishes of local residents, and to comply with any action taken by law enforcement."

Media inquiries

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